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SUMMARY: This article examines the publishing procedures of nineteenth-century medical societies, using the Medical Society of Ghent (Belgium) as a case study. It argues, more precisely, that the introduction of formalized review procedures in medical societies can be considered part of the emergence of a professional scientific culture in the first half of the nineteenth century. First, by participating in these procedures physicians took on different stylized roles, for example of the contributing author, the righteous judge, or the punctual secretary, and articulated new professional values such as contributing to science. Second, the publishing procedures of medical societies also provide insight into the mechanisms of reaching consensus in nineteenth-century medicine. By developing new scientific genres, such as the published meeting report, medical societies aimed to extend the community of peers beyond the group of society members and establish trust and agreement throughout the medical community.

KEYWORDS: peer review, medical societies, medical profession, scientific standards, scientific publishing

For the Belgian physician and botanist Jean Carolus, the publication of his *La chirurgie de maître Jean Ypermans* was a worrying undertaking. In April 1853, he had asked Charles Poelman, professor at the University of Ghent and at that time also secretary of that city's Medical Society, whether the society would be interested in publishing an annotated edition of a manuscript of the fourteenth-century surgeon Jean Ypermans (1296–1351).

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Unsure of his proposal, Carolus requested Poelman's advice: "Please tell me bluntly if I got carried away by my penchant for archeological research in this Country, and because of that, have regarded this work too highly."[1] More than an indication of modesty, Carolus's doubts about the quality of his work reflected his anxieties about the procedures of the Society, which stipulated that each manuscript submitted was to be judged worthy—or not worthy—of publication by a commission composed of society members. In Carolus's case, his doubts proved unfounded as the Medical Society of Ghent soon decided to publish his work in its journal.[2] Yet, between this decision and the publication of the final chapters lay a long and tortuous path: parts of his manuscript were lost by his former professor, Adolphe Burggraeve, to whom the work was dedicated; a facsimile of two excerpts (see Figure 1) was made by the Brussels lithographers Simoneau et Foovay, "to draw attention to its age and give a good impression of the [fourteenth-century] manuscript"; and finally the delays in publishing the final chapters had led Carolus to accuse the society of not meeting its commitments and to demand that it return his manuscript.[3]

The publication of Carolus's *La chirurgie de maître Jean Ypermans*, however, was an exceptional case among the medical observations that regularly appeared in the journals of medical societies. Compared to these exclusively medical studies, Carolus's work seems to be the exponent of an older, eighteenth-century tradition of liberal learning that included diverse kinds of studies, ranging from history and archaeology to literary works. In his study of the medical community in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century York, Michael Brown has shown how the publication of such cultural works formed an important means for physicians to enhance their public profile.[4] Brown argues that in the eighteenth-century

1. University Library of Ghent (hereafter ULG), Hs. 3012.4.1, Correspondance reçu, 1840–1856 (hereafter Cor. R.), letter of April 22, 1853, of Jean Carolus to Charles Poelman: "Si je me puis laissé déborder par mon goût pour les recherches archéologiques du Pays, et que par là, j'ai prise cet ouvrage trop haut, veuillez s.v.p. me le dire franchement."

2. "Séance du 27 Juillet 1853," *Bulletin de la Société de Médecine de Gand* (hereafter *Bull. de la SMG*) 20 (1853): 141–42, 141.

3. ULG, Cor. R., letter of July 8, 1853, of Jean Carolus to Charles Poelman (facsimile): "Pour fixer l'âge et pour donner une bonne idée du manuscrit," letter of January 11, 1854, of Jean Carolus to Charles Poelman (missing chapters), letter of April 14, 1856, of Jean Carolus to Charles Poelman (return of manuscript). The majority of the work appeared in the *Annales* of 1854: Jean Carolus, "La chirurgie de maître Jean Ypermans, le père de la chirurgie flamande (1295–1351)," *Annales de la Société de Médecine de Gand* (hereafter *Ann. de la SMG*) 32 (1854): 19–148.

4. Michael Brown, *Performing Medicine: Medical Culture and Identity in Provincial England, c.1760–1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 48–75.

medical world, characterized by intellectual plurality, these often beautifully designed and nicely illustrated works displayed the civil values and literary skills of their authors to the urban intellectual elite. Publishing, in other words, formed an essential component of the "social self-fashioning of the late eighteenth-century medical gentleman."[5] Carolus seems to be a late example of this tradition. By publishing his comprehensive, embellished edition of a medieval medical manuscript, he similarly intended to display his broad medical and historical interests.

Yet, at the same time, Carolus's publishing trajectory also hints at the erosion of this tradition of liberal learning in the first half of the nineteenth century. By submitting his work to the judgment of a medical society, Carolus aimed for a more exclusive, medical audience. More important, he also sought the formal recognition of the quality of his work by his medical colleagues. Such engagement in the professional community is indicative of broader changes in medicine in the first half of the nineteenth century. As Brown has shown, medical knowledge was increasingly defined as a socially instrumental form of expertise, instead of a form of liberal learning—a transition he linked to a shift in the identity of physicians, "from civic gentlemen and liberal scholars . . . [to] scientific professionals."[6] Medical societies made themselves essential in this process by presenting the medical sciences as a collective endeavor. Their journals, Brown argues, functioned as "technologies of imagination" by allowing individual authors and readers to participate in the collective enterprise.[7] Within such a more progressive and exclusively medical framework, literary, archaeological, and historical works, such as the edition of a medieval manuscript, gradually disappeared from medical journals.

Following Brown, this article examines the publishing procedures of medical societies as part of the emergence of a professional scientific culture in the first half of the nineteenth century. Its focus, however, is not so much on the collective, imaginative function of medical journals, but rather on the general patterns in the participation of physicians in these procedures as authors, reviewers, and editors. Despite the current debates on the system of peer review, little historical research has been conducted on reviewing and editing in medicine. In an exploratory study, John Burnham pointed to occasional refereeing in medical journals in the early to mid-nineteenth century, but argued that the institutionalization of editorial peer review took place only in the specialized journals of the twentieth century.[8] In the British historiography of medicine, the

5. Ibid., 50.

6. Ibid., 226.

7. Ibid., 153, 160.

8. John C. Burnham, "The Evolution of Editorial Peer Review," *JAMA* 263 (1990): 1323–29.

development of refereeing has been interpreted as part of the formation of the nineteenth-century medical profession. Jean and Irvine Loudon, for example, described the selection of articles in "house journals"—journals published by an institution, such as a medical society, college, or hospital—as a means of promoting corporate professionalism among physicians by declining "'obnoxious' and scurrilous contributions."[9] In general, medical societies have often been characterized as the gatekeepers of the medical community, establishing boundaries between orthodox and unorthodox medicine.[10]

Yet, besides such boundary work, the publishing procedures of medical societies also provide insight into the mechanisms of reaching consensus in nineteenth-century medicine. Drawing on Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin's studies of the construction of scientific knowledge, such consensus could be reached only through a set of specific rules and practices.[11] In nineteenth-century medical societies, so this article suggests, these rules can be understood as a form of role play, in which physicians took on different stylized roles, for example of the contributing author, the righteous judge, and the punctual secretary. By taking on these roles, individual physicians indeed became part of a collective scientific enterprise, as Brown has argued, but they also intended to reach agreement, through formalized debate, on what constituted "science." To this end, as will be further argued, formalized review procedures were introduced during the meetings of medical societies, and new scientific genres, such as the published meeting report, were developed in their journals.

The nineteenth-century Belgian medical press, in particular, allowed the exploration of such mechanisms of reaching consensus. Different from the British case, in which debate and disagreement were only gradually introduced into learned societies and the publication of meeting reports was a controversial issue (as this was regarded by some as a breach of the private, gentlemanly atmosphere in these societies),[12] the Belgian

9. Jean Loudon and Irvine Loudon, "Medicine, Politics and the Medical Periodical 1800–50," in *Medical Journals and Medical Knowledge: Historical Essays*, ed. William F. Bynum, Stephen Lock, and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1992), 49–69, 56.

10. Jacqueline Jenkinson, "The Role of Medical Societies in the Rise of the Scottish Medical Profession, 1730–1939," *Soc. Hist. Med.* 4 (1991): 253–75; Jenkinson, *Scottish Medical Societies, 1731–1939: Their History and Records* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993). Other case studies have stressed the function of medical societies as places of networking among physicians: Hilary Marland, "Early Nineteenth-Century Medical Society Activity: The Huddersfield Case," *J. Regional Local Stud.* 6, no. 2 (1985): 37–48; S. C. Lawrence, "'Desirous of Improvements in Medicine.' Pupils and Practitioners in the Medical Societies at Guy's and St. Bartholomew's Hospitals, 1795–1815," *Bull. Hist. Med.* 59 (1985): 89–104.

11. Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* (1985; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

12. Brown, *Performing Medicine* (n. 4), 160–61.

medical societies from the 1830s onward introduced formalized procedures for criticizing scientific papers and published extensive accounts of their meetings. Such formal and public medical discussions resembled the French tradition of scientific debate.[13] The accounts of the meetings of the Parisian Academy of Medicine, which were closely followed in Belgium, were for example equally published in detail.[14] In general, the publication of meeting reports made the publishing procedures in medical societies more formal and regulated. The review process, in turn, became a public act and thus required finding the right tone for all the players involved.

In the following paragraphs, I reconstruct the publication process of nineteenth-century medical societies, using the Medical Society of Ghent as a case study. The society, founded in 1834, was the first one in Belgium to introduce extensive review reports in its two interrelated journals, providing a model for other Belgian societies. Its monthly *Bulletin* comprised the meeting reports, which contained the judgments of work submitted as well as of smaller studies or medical observations; its *Annales* were composed of those studies judged worthy of publication. Apart from these journals, the rich archival record of the society, especially for the 1840s and 1850s, allows a look behind the scenes. By examining the society's correspondence, not only the motivations of the authors are revealed, but it is also possible to include those men who operated in the background, for example the ones who embellished, edited, and printed Carolus's work.[15] First, I position the Belgian medical press within an international context and situate the emergence of formal review procedures. Second, the roles of the authors, the reviewers, and the society's secretary and publishers are successively discussed.

The Belgian Medical Press

During the first two decades after the declaration of Belgian independence in 1830, much of the debates in the Belgian medical press treated the question of medical reform. As a result of the law on medical practice

13. Raf de Bont, "'Writing in Letters of Blood': Manners in Scientific Dispute in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the German Lands," *Hist. Sci.* 51, no. 3 (2013): 309–35, 311–14; Martin J. S. Rudwick, *The Great Devonian Controversy: The Shaping of Scientific Knowledge among Gentlemanly Specialists* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 25–26, 29.

14. George Weisz, *The Medical Mandarins: The French Academy of Medicine in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 70–73.

15. Jonathan Topham encourages a broader look at the publication process, which includes the entire "communication circuit of print": Jonathan R. Topham, "Scientific Publishing and the Reading of Science in Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Historiographical Survey and Guide to Sources," *Stud. Hist. Philos. Sci.* 31, no. 4 (2000): 559–612, 560–62.

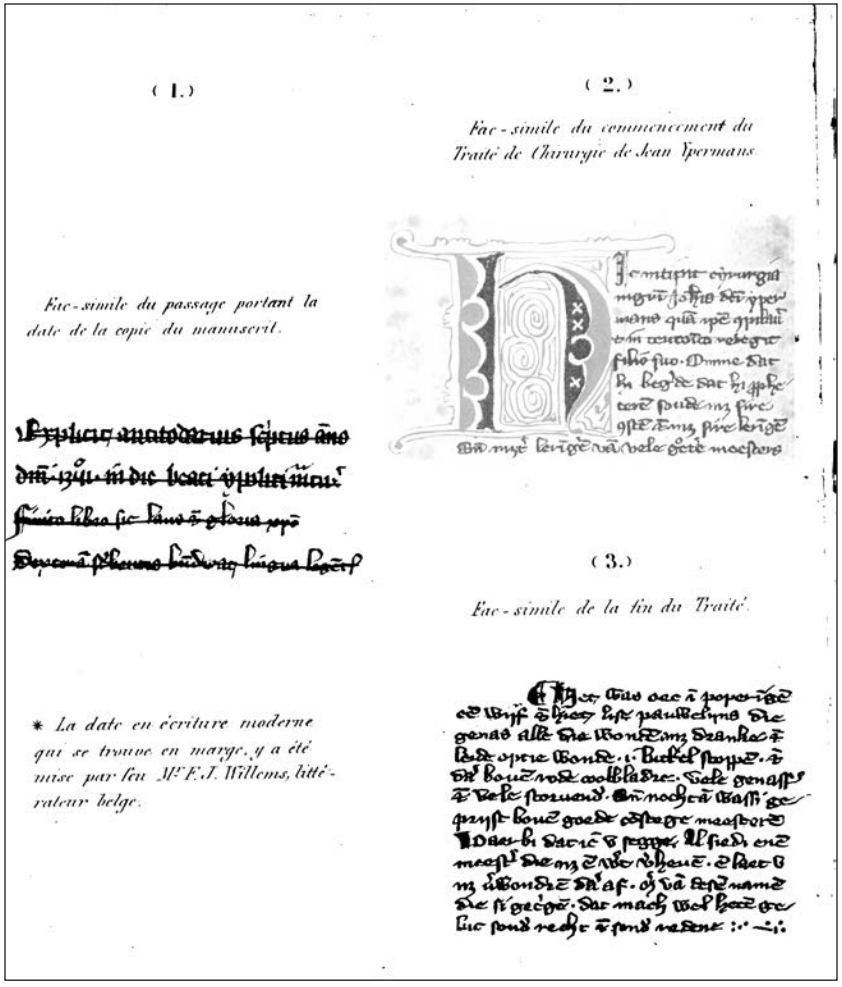

Figure 1. The facsimile that embellished Carolus's edition of a medieval manuscript. Source: Jean Carolus, *La chirurgie de maître Jean Ypermans, le père de la chirurgie flamande (1295–1351)* (Gand: Gyselynck, 1854), Ghent University Library.

of 1818, adopted under Dutch rule, Belgian physicians were organized in two classes: the university-trained doctors and surgeons, and the second class of mostly rural physicians and surgeons who received their education in private medical schools.[16] In 1835, a new law was passed, in which the

16. Claire Dickstein-Bernard, "Panorama de l'enseignement médical en Belgique au XIXe siècle (1795–1876)," in *La formation du médecin: des Lumières au Laboratoire,* ed. Claude

second class of medical men was abolished and a central jury was installed that issued degrees to students of the two state universities in Ghent and Liège and those of the newly founded private universities in Leuven and Brussels.[17] After 1835, debates on medical reform continued, but now concentrated on the division between medicine and surgery, of which most Belgian physicians demanded the abolishment. At the same time, new centralized advisory institutions were founded, such as the Belgian Academy of Medicine in 1841 and the Superior Health Council in 1849. In this latter year, the unified academic degree of doctor of medicine, surgery, and obstetrics was also introduced, ending half a century of intense transformation of the professional structures of Belgian medicine.

In advocating the necessity of these successive medical reforms, many Belgian reformers referred to the example of French medicine. Similar to contemporary reform debates in England and the United States, French medicine served both as an example to follow and as a counterpart to react against.[18] The Belgian medical practitioners, reform advocates claimed, needed to engage more with the medical sciences, as did their French colleagues. But at the same time, they could not slavishly take over French medical theories and scientific institutions. Through their scientific work, they rather needed to provide Belgian medicine with its own individual character. This ambition is important to the strong expansion of the Belgian medical press in this period. Both individual editors and medical societies claimed to engage the Belgian medical practitioners with the medical sciences by publishing journals. Indeed, as the bibliographic research by Karel Velle has shown, the number of medical journals published in Belgium rose steeply, especially during the 1830s, when thirteen new journals were founded, and the 1840s, when twenty new journals were established.[19] By way of comparison, only four

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Bruneel and Paul Servais (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1989), 59–76, 65–67; Rita Schepers, *De opkomst van het medisch beroep in België. De evolutie van de wetgeving en de beroepsorganisaties in de 19e eeuw* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989), 62–73; Schepers, "Towards Unity and Autonomy: The Belgian Medical Profession in the Nineteenth Century," *Med. Hist.* 38 (1994): 237–54.

17. Dickstein-Bernard, "Panorama de l'enseignement" (n. 16), 67–68; Schepers, *De opkomst* (n. 16), 106–15.

18. See, for example, John H. Warner, "The Idea of Science in English Medicine: The 'Decline of Science' and the Rhetoric of Reform, 1815–1845," in *British Medicine in an Age of Reform*, ed. Roger French and Andrew Wear (London: Routledge, 1991), 136–64; Warner, *Against the Spirit of System: The French Impulse in Nineteenth-Century American Medicine* (1998; repr., Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

19. Karel Velle, "Bronnen voor de medische geschiedenis: de Belgische medische pers (begin XIXde eeuw—1940)," *Annalen van de Belgische vereniging voor de geschiedenis van hospitalen en volksgezondheid* 23–24 (1985–86): 67–119, 76–85.

journals had been published in the late 1820s.[20] Such an increase seems comparable to the contemporary growth of the British and French medical press, which counted many more new journal titles, but also aimed at a much wider medical audience than did the Belgian journals.[21] Similar to the British medical journals, of which three-quarters were published in London, the majority of these Belgian journals were also published in the capital city of Brussels.[22]

Besides such general similarities, some features were also typical of the Belgian medical press. In Paris, the continuous reproduction of French medical articles by the Brussels journal editors was, at least by some authors, deemed characteristic of Belgian medicine. In 1844, a Parisian serial writer commented, "Belgium, we all are well aware, and the gentlemen librarians are even more aware, has an irresistible tendency to *imitate* . . . everything her dear sister France does."[23] The reference to mimicry was clearly intended to criticize those Belgian medical journals that systematically reprinted the articles appearing in the Parisian medical journals—a practice that would disappear in 1854 after a treaty between France and Belgium.[24] The statement of the Parisian writer was discussed in various Belgian journals, including the *Bulletin* of the Medical Society of Ghent, in which an article titled "A Rectification" was published. Unlike authors published in other journals, however, the Ghent physicians surprisingly did not defend the Belgian medical press. To the contrary, they agreed with the Parisian commentator, denouncing "a tendency that is fatal for our literature, distorts our ideas, dishonors Belgium."[25] Their rectification rather applied to the geography of the Belgian press. In the eyes of the Ghent physicians, not all Belgian journals were guilty of

20. Ibid., 73–76.

21. The Belgian medical community counted around a thousand physicians in the first half of the nineteenth century: Karel Velle, *De nieuwe biechtvaders. De sociale geschiedenis van de arts in België* (Leuven: Kritak, 1991), 343. On the Parisian medical press, see Weisz, *Medical Mandarins* (n. 14), 71; on the British medical press, see William F. Bynum and Janice C. Wilson, "Periodical Knowledge: Medical Journals and Their Editors in Nineteenth-Century Britain," in Bynum, Lock, and Porter, *Medical Journals* (n. 9), 29–48, 30.

22. Bynum and Wilson, "Periodical Knowledge" (n. 21), 29–48, 33–35.

23. "Une rectification," *Bull. de la SMG* 10 (1844): 95–97, quotation on 95: "La Belgique, nous le savons tous, et Messieurs les libraires le savent encore mieux que nous, a une tendance irrésistible à *imiter*—le mot est parlementaire—tout ce que fait sa chère soeur la France."

24. Ludo Simons, *Geschiedenis van de uitgeverij in Vlaanderen*, vol. 1 (Tielt: Lannoo, 1984–87), 142.

25. "Une rectification" (n. 23), 95: "une tendance qui tue notre littérature, qui fausse nos idées, qui déshonore la Belgique."

malpractices. Rather, "the swindlers of typography" were located in one city: Brussels, "little Paris, as they say there."[26]

The publication of the Ghent *Bulletin* and *Annales* occurred against the background of such urban competition. Although the Ghent physicians criticized their Brussels colleagues for relying too heavily on French medicine, their publishing procedures were inspired as well by the French scientific tradition. As George Weisz has shown, the procedures of judging medical studies by setting up commissions of society members go back to the French national medical societies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries such as the Parisian Academy of Medicine.[27] In these societies, the work submitted by aspiring authors—always men—was judged by an assigned commission of several society members. At the next society meeting, this commission presented a report that served as the basis for discussion on the quality of the submitted work, leading to a final vote on its suitability for publication.[28] In Ghent, these procedures were expanded and applied in a more egalitarian way. Unlike in the French academy, for example, not only the manuscript submissions of nonmembers but also those of the established society members were judged.[29] Moreover, while in the French academy only a small portion of the manuscript submissions (e.g., 10 percent in the mid-1850s) were effectively evaluated, and even fewer published,[30] the majority of all of the submissions to the Medical Society of Ghent were evaluated and in the case of a positive judgment also published. In the local setting of the Medical Society of Ghent, the application of these publishing procedures without distinctions became an important means to stimulate the scientific activities of a broad audience of Belgian medical practitioners.

The emergence of published meeting reports can equally be regarded as a means of reaching such a broad audience. As Brittany Pladek has shown, the nineteenth-century medical press was heavily influenced by trends in the general press, the appearance of weekly medical journals, such as the *Lancet*, being the best example.[31] In Belgium, the publication of the meeting reports of medical societies similarly reflected new forms of medical journalism. Resembling the reports of parliamentary debate, these reports gave a lively impression of the discussions held in society meetings and were published monthly, allowing readers to follow-up on

26. Ibid., 96: "flibustiers de la typographie," "un petit Paris—comme on dit là-bas."

27. Weisz, *Medical Mandarins* (n. 14), 87–98.

28. Ibid., 65–66.

29. Ibid., 64–65.

30. Ibid., 66.

31. Brittany Pladek, "'A Variety of Tastes': The *Lancet* in the Early-Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press," *Bull. Hist. Med.* 85 (2011): 560–86.

medical debates. Already in 1836, in the second year of publication of the *Bulletin*, the editors were ensuring their readers that measures were being taken to secure the speedy publication of the reports, immediately after the meetings, "in the interest of presenting to the readers the novelty of the questions they comprise."[32] The Medical Society of Ghent was the first to publish such extensive transcriptions of speeches and discussions in Belgium. In the 1840s, the genre became common in nearly all journals published by Belgian medical societies. The Medical Society of Brussels, for example, made arrangements with a stenographer to expand its discussions in 1845.[33]

The publication of meeting reports had profound implications for the different players involved in the publication process. Aspiring authors now faced a public discussion of their work that could potentially be read by all of their colleagues. In addition, the role of those society members who acted as the editors of their journal also changed. They no longer operated in the background as middlemen reproducing articles, or as mere facilitators of publishing. In the published meeting report, they presented themselves as scientific guides or judges who directed their readers through the expanding medical sciences. It is precisely this turn to the medical public that made publishing in the journals of medical societies a tricky undertaking as processes of review and discussion that used to occur behind the scenes were now placed in the forefront. These anxieties about public reviewing are perhaps best illustrated by the Brussels pharmacist Henri Bonnewijn, who found himself in the awkward situation of having sent the same manuscript to both the Medical Society of Ghent and the *Gazette Médicale de Liège*, a short-lived scientific journal edited from 1854 to 1855 by H. Boëns and L. M. Lombard.[34] Having wrongly interpreted the lack of answer from the society as a negative judgment, Bonnewijn apologized profusely: "[I then decided] to publish my study, not through the agency of a learned society, after report and preceding discussion, but through a simple scientific journal which contented itself with the simple reproduction of a study, and leaves all responsibility to the author. . . . It was thus not at all my intention to render the Society ridiculous in the eyes of the medical world when I charged another journal with the

32. *Bull. de la SMG* 2 (1836): iv: "présenter ainsi aux lecteur l'intérêt de la nouveauté des questions qu'ils renferment."

33. "Bulletin de la séance du 5 février 1845," *Journal de médecine, de chirurgie et de pharmacologie* 5 (1845): 210–14, quotation on 214: "pour la publication un peu étendue des discussions scientifiques."

34. Velle, "Bronnen" (n. 19), 88.

publication of my note."[35] In the context of published review and discussion, such misunderstandings happened, as Bonnewijn suggests, before "the eyes of the medical world." In addition, although Bonnewijn clearly played up to the editors of the society, his comparison hints at the development of a hierarchy on the market for medical journals in the middle of the nineteenth century—a hierarchy in which the public judging of studies by society members became a crucial element.

The Contributing Author: Satisfaction and Honor

Situations such as the one in which Bonnewijn got involved were, although highly unpleasant, also rather uncommon. The most important risk authors faced when submitting their study to the Medical Society of Ghent was the possibility of a negative judgment, and thus the public rejection of their work. In 1843, the Liège physician Midavaine was for example told that his article on the inflammation of the cornea could not be published as the commission members disagreed with him on the diagnostics of the disease.[36] Others were publicly reprimanded for their medical conduct: a treatment with high doses of camphor in 1847 was judged "far from being without danger."[37] Yet, for a varied group of physicians these risks seem to have been outweighed by the benefits of publishing in the society's journal.

According to its rulebook of 1837, each manuscript that passed judgment would be published by the society.[38] In addition, the author would receive twenty-five copies, with the possibility of ordering more at a reasonable price, together with the title of correspondent of the society. Of equal importance was the stipulation that such a title could not be allocated for submitting published work, excluding therefore the common practice of assembling titles by donating publications to the libraries of

35. ULG, Cor. R, letter of September 12, 1854, of Henri Bonnewijn to Charles Poelman: ". . . à publier mon travail, non par l'intermédiaire d'une société savante, après rapport et discussion préalables, mais par les soins d'un simple journal scientifique qui, se contentait de la simple reproduction d'une notice, en laisse toute la responsabilité à son auteur. . . . Ce n'est donc point l'idée de rendre la société ridicule aux yeux du monde médical qui m'a poussé à charger un autre journal de la publication de ma note."

36. ULG, Hs. 3012 v. 4.1. Correspondence 1843–1856 (hereafter Cor.), undated letter [October 1843] of the Medical Society of Ghent to Dr. Midavaine; "Séance du 3 Octobre," *Bull. de la SMG* 9 (1843): 175–96, 196.

37. ULG, Cor., undated letter [March 1847] of the Medical Society of Ghent to Dr. Vervier, "comme un moyen qui est loin d'être dépourvu de tout danger."

38. *Statuts de la société de médecine de Gand, modifiés d'après la décision prise dans la séance du 18 Juillet 1837* (Gand, 1837), 8.

different societies. Such a rigid approach to the allocation of titles can be traced back to the learned societies in the late eighteenth century and has been regarded as part of the development of quality control in scientific research.[39] While this mechanism indeed augmented the importance of the judgment of studies by society members, it should not, however, be interpreted as a means of creating an exclusive or elitist scientific community. In the Medical Society of Ghent, the rule was mostly applied to exclude foreign physicians who, perhaps unaware of the procedures of the society, hoped to receive a membership either through sending publications or through an exchange between their own journals and the publications of the Ghent physicians. In 1848, such an exchange was for example agreed with the *Abeja medica* in Barcelona, but the request of its editors to be associated with the society was declined.[40]

Instead of being a mechanism of exclusivity, the prerequisite of submitting a manuscript rather opened up the scientific world for different groups of physicians who had not been part of the learned community at the turn of the eighteenth century. Newly graduated, ambitious young physicians regularly featured among the authors who sent in a manuscript. In 1856, Nicholas-Chrétien Du Moulin, for example, described his submission as "the work of a young man taking his first steps in the domain of publicity."[41] Yet, while a scientific study for Du Moulin, who would later become a professor at the University of Ghent, was a logical step to further his academic ambitions, for another group of contributors such clear ambitions were absent. These doctors, holding private practice in the region of Ghent, did not attend the meetings of the society, but might be considered part of the readers of its meetings reports. For them, the publication of a scientific study formed an occasional in-depth exploration of an exceptional case from their daily practice. In 1854, Louis Verhaeghe, from the Belgian seaside town of Ostend, for example, apologized to the society for not having submitted any new work: "It is because I had no interesting case to present to you. Since then, I have come across a dislocation of the humerus of which I hereby send you the observation. If it could be used for the *Annales*, that would give me great satisfaction."[42]

39. James E. McClellan III, *Science Reorganized: Scientific Societies in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 178–81, 240–49.

40. ULG, Cor., letter of January 18, 1848, from Charles Poelman to F. Arroz.

41. ULG, Cor. R., letter of January 7, 1856, of Nicholas-Chrétien Du Moulin to the Medical Society of Ghent, "le travail d'un jeune homme essayant ses premiers pas sur le terrain de la publicité."

42. ULG, Cor. R., letter of January 25, 1854, from Louis Verhaeghe to the Medical Society of Ghent: "c'est que je n'avais aucun fait intéressant à vous communiquer. Depuis lors, j'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer une luxation en arrière de l'humerus dont je vous transmets

While Verhaeghe's apology hints at the expectations of frequent scientific contributions of a corresponding member of the society—Verhaeghe seemed to have felt obliged to contribute—his reference to satisfaction suggests that the writing of a scientific contribution was most likely an exceptional but appreciated occasion during which private practitioners could engage with the medical literature and improve their knowledge.

Such an attitude toward science, as an exceptional activity, was reflected in the participation of these authors in the editorial process. When Dr. Jumné, for example, was asked whether some parts of his observation of a malformation—an exceptional case—might be omitted from publication in the *Annales*, he authorized the society's secretary to leave out "what you think is necessary; I even take the Liberty, Sir, to request you to do what is best."[43] Like Verhaeghe, Jumné emphasized that he wanted only "some copies for my personal satisfaction."[44] Others, like Dr. Dambre, even informed the secretary of their intentions with the copies: "I will distribute them among my neighboring colleagues; it will be a means to establish clientele relationships between us."[45] Such a combination of motivations for scientific study, as a means to improve one's knowledge and skills, but also to increase one's professional status, was not uncommon in nineteenth-century medicine. John Harley Warner has for example characterized similar intentions of American physicians as the "pursuit of professional development"—a category that could include a wide array of motivations, from commercial interests to augmenting one's self-esteem.[46] In light of such motivations, it is telling that both Jumné and Verhaeghe referred to "satisfaction" to describe their reasons for publishing a scientific study.

The occasional publications of rank-and-file practitioners, however, did not mean that more established authors turned away from the journals of the Medical Society of Ghent. Perhaps, to the contrary, its prerequisite of submitting original work might have made the title of correspondent

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ci-joint l'observation. Si cela peut servir pour les annales, j'en serai charmé"; Verhaeghe's study was published soon after in the *Bulletin*: Louis Verhaeghe, "Luxation de l'humérus en arrière," *Bull. de la SMG* 21 (1854): 286–92.

43. ULG, Cor. R., letter of March 8, 1854, from Dr. Jumné to the Medical Society of Ghent, "que vous jugerez convenables de faire; je prends même, Monsieur, la liberté, de vous priez de faire pour le mieux."

44. Ibid.: "un tirage pour ma seule satisfaction"; Jumné's note, like Verhaeghe's study, was published in the *Bulletin*: Jumné, "Note sur un monstre double sycéphalien," *Bull. de la SMG* 21 (1854): 179–81.

45. ULG, Cor. R., letter of March 15, 1856, of Dr. Dambre to the Medical Society of Ghent: "je les distribuerai à mes collègues voisins, ce sera un moyen d'établir des relations de clientèle entre nous."

46. Warner, *Against the Spirit of System* (n. 18), 20, 23–24.

more valuable and thus may have inclined those physicians to consider the society's journals for their publications. Unlike Jumné and Verhaeghe, these more experienced authors were strongly involved in the process of review and editing. They often responded to the criticism of the reviewers with letters, which were printed in the *Bulletin*, extending the review process to defend their medical views and methods. Given the omnipresence of such debates, Bonnewijn, for example, wrote that he was "even more pleased" with the society's judgment because "the commission had voted the full and entire publication of my work, without first demanding additional observations or explications."[47] On other occasions, however, even the misplacing of a single word could give rise to strong accusations. In 1839, the military physician Laurillard Fallot wrote a letter to claim that he had written not "profoundly" but rather "strongly"—a misquotation that led him to conclude that the criticism of his work lacked "accuracy and justice."[48] And in 1855, Dr. Stacquez even wrote that he regretted having sent his study to the society because of a printing error—the adjective "dynamic" had been wrongly added to "illusion" instead of to "deviation." Stacquez concluded, "Evidently, there's no way of rendering an author more ridiculous: a dynamic illusion!"[49] For these experienced authors, the safeguarding of their honor and reputation was a crucial part of the review process.

The differences between experienced authors and occasional publishers equally become clear in their requests concerning the design of their free copies. The editing of the title page, in particular, was carefully followed up. Unlike the title page of their studies in the *Annales*, which contained merely the professional employment and the title of correspondent, the copies for the author featured, upon a common request, the entire list of his memberships. The Swiss physician Édouard Cornaz, for example, requested to add the names of Ghent and Vaud (France) to the alphabetic list of titles he had already sent to the society, together with his manuscript.[50] Carolus similarly asked to print his "personal titles" as

47. ULG, Cor. R, letter of March 7, 1855, from Henri Bonnewijn to the Medical Society of Ghent: "Cette communication m'est d'autant plus agréable que la commission a voté l'impression pleine et entière de mon travail sans exiger, de ma part, des observations ou explications préalables."

48. "Séance du 9 Juillet 1839," *Bull. de la SMG* 5 (1839): 89–99, quotation on 90: "profondément," "fortement," and "d'exactitude et de justice."

49. ULG, Cor. R., letter of May 12, 1855, from Dr. Stacquez to the Medical Society of Ghent: "Evidemment, il est impossible de rendre un auteur plus ridicule; une chimère dynamique!"

50. ULG, Cor. R., undated letter [June 1854] of Dr. Cornaz to the Medical Society of Ghent.

indicated on a specimen.[51] The same men ordered considerable numbers of additional copies: Cornaz ordered two hundred, Carolus ordered an additional forty, and Bonnewijn asked for an additional one hundred copies that were "luxuriously sewn," which for Bonnewijn meant "[with a] beautifully titled cover page, beautiful paper, thick and of a large format."[52] Their requests hint in the first place at the construction of a public image of a well-established, well-connected scientist, but also at the function of these separate copies as promotional gifts. The French physician Mordret, for example, indicated that he needed additional copies "to distribute among friends and among several Societies that I promised."[53] For these authors, publications and personal titles continued to serve as important means for establishing themselves in nineteenth-century medicine. They show how the eighteenth-century tradition of scientific publishing as a means of social self-fashioning was carried on by the more prosperous and established physicians in the nineteenth-century medical community.

The Righteous Judge: Parliamentary Speech

If the meeting reports were indeed carefully read, and if the misplacing of a single word could place one's reputation at risk, how then was criticism—the basis of the judging of studies—organized? Such criticism certainly had the potential to undermine the fragile relations between the society and individual authors. When too severe, it could damage the reputation of the author. But conversely, when too light, it could harm the society's reputation as a judge. This need for careful balancing might help explain the highly directed course of the meetings and the formalizing of meeting reports. Much of the procedures of the judging of studies seem precisely intended to transcend the level of individual appreciation and reputation and enable a more objective discussion of the work that was presented to the society.

The regulation of judgment appears in the first place in the role of the *rapporteur*. To mediate between the interests of the society and the individual authors, the rapporteur presented himself as a representative of the audience of Belgian medical practitioners who read the society's journal.

51. ULG, Cor. R., letter of August 4, 1853, of Jean Carolus to the Medical Society of Ghent.

52. ULG, Cor. R., letter of February 5, 1856, of Henri Bonnewijn to the Medical Society of Ghent: "luxement brochés, c'est-à-dire: belle couverture titrée, beau papier, épais et d'un grand format."

53. ULG, Cor. R., letter of January 22, 1856, of Dr. Mordret to Charles Poelman: "pour distribuer à quelques amis ou à quelques sociétés auxquelles j'ai promis cette brochure."

His judgment of the "scientific merit" of the study was thus equated with its "worthiness" to be brought under the attention of such an audience. Science therefore was always in the interest of medical practice. In light of this audience of practitioners, the criteria for acceptance or rejection could be diverse: the newness of a certain treatment or, in the case of negative publication advice, the lack of innovative elements; the uniqueness of a special case; and also the inefficiency of certain treatments. All of these elements could be cited as being "in the interest of practitioners." In addition, the rapporteur could give more concrete publication advice by asking for more details, suggesting complementary literature or the inclusion of drawings, for example of anatomical pathological evidence. In the latter case, the rapporteur presented himself as the guardian of the "authenticity" of the study, as the readers of the Ghent journals would get the same information as the society members to whom such pathological evidence was shown.[54] Such editorial advice and demands can be interpreted as means of gaining the trust of these readers, of involving them in the review process. Or, in the words of Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, of turning them into "virtual witnesses" of the society meetings.[55]

Editorial efforts to convince readers were also common in the judgment of surgical techniques. During the society meetings, such judgment was often done by comparing drawings of the original condition of the patient with the condition of the treated patient, who was then presented to the society members. In the published accounts of these surgical operations, "before-and-after drawings" were included, reproducing the comparison for the readers. The Liège physician Charles Phillips, for example, inserted such drawings in his publication on a case of nose surgery (see Figure 2). In addition, he attended the meeting in which his work was discussed and performed his new surgical techniques on a cadaver, as rapporteur Burggraeve explained, "to better allow you [the society members] to appreciate his excellence and ingenious modifications."[56] Both the drawings and the description of the demonstration in the meeting report, in which the appreciation of the society members was emphasized, aimed to convince the readers of the usefulness of Phillips's surgical technique.

Such general agreement on new treatments or surgeries, however, was exceptional. In most cases, the rapporteur needed to carefully account for his judgment. Put differently, he could not simply apply criteria; he also needed to explain why these criteria were in the interest of the

54. "Séance du 4 Juin 1844," *Bull. de la SMG* 10 (1844): 199–216, 200.

55. Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* (n. 11), 22–79, 336.

56. "Séance du 8 Janvier 1839," *Bull. de la SMG* 5 (1839): 5–20, quotation on 6: "pourra mieux vous en faire apprécier l'excellence et vous faire connaître les modifications ingénieuses qu'il y a apportées."

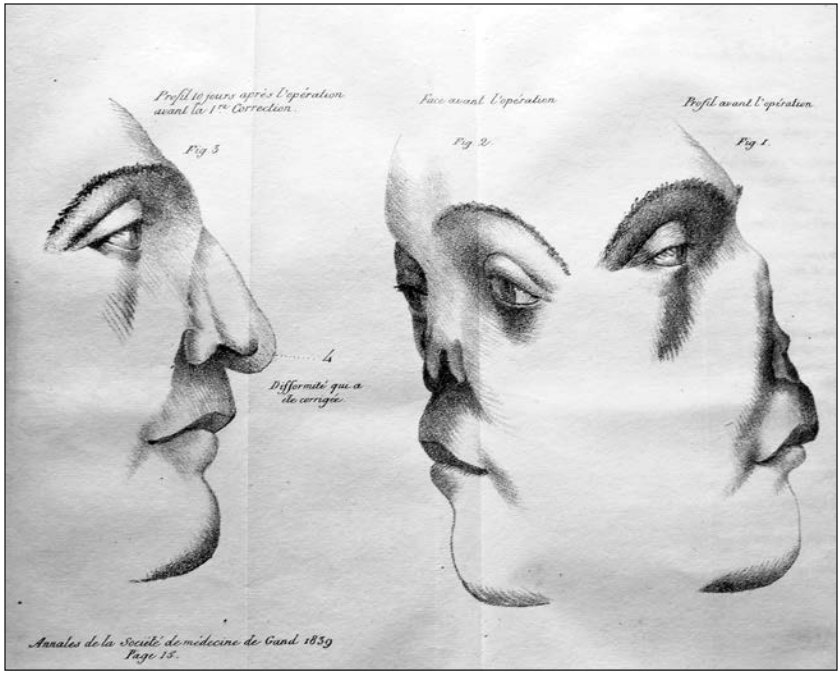

Figure 2. Drawings presenting the patient before and after a surgical operation on the nose by the Liège physician Philips. Source: Charles V. J. Phillips, "Observations chirurgicales," *Ann. de la SMG* 5 (1839): 15–26, Ghent University Library.

audience he claimed to represent. Such justifying could turn these reports into means of setting standards. When Stacquez had blamed an author for communicating only his successes with a treatment, not his failures, he defended his judgment in such general terms: "as if the physician who decided to publish what he has observed, only intends to boast about his successes, as if by indicating that he's not always successful, he would compromise his reputation."[57] In articulating such codes of conduct, Stacquez presented himself not only as a representative, but also as an authority who could explain the ideal motivations for scientific publishing, displaying both erudition and leadership. Through such reports, the readers of the *Bulletin* were indeed constantly made aware of the norms and values of scientific conduct: it was openness, the accumulation of observations

57. "Séance du 4 Juillet 1843," *Bull. de la SMG* 9 (1843): 87–107, quotation on 88: "comme si le médecin qui se décide à publier ce qu'il a observé, devait seulement avoir pour but de se prévaloir de ses succès; comme si en faisant connaître qu'il n réussit pas toujours, il compromettait sa réputation."

and facts, and practicality that guided the "scientific" physician. The key to a successful performance of criticism lay therefore in finding the right relation to one's audience by mixing scientific ideology and detailed expert knowledge.

Such role playing could also take the sting out of some of the conflicts that emerged during the reviewing process. In a context of published judgments, a critical comment could after all be easily interpreted as an attack on someone's reputation. As Raf de Bont has shown, the rules of early nineteenth-century scientific etiquette were based on avoiding personal confrontations by emphasizing politeness and gentlemanly conduct.[58] In the Medical Society of Ghent, ridicule and offense were similarly rejected, reflecting the customs of gentlemanly science. The formalization of the reports and discussions in medical societies can be considered ways of removing such matters of personal interest and conflict from scientific debate. Criticism was thus not disapproved or excluded, but rather strictly regulated. In fact, a critical opinion could always be accounted for, or even hidden, by pointing to the *role* of judge. When confronted with the remark by a fellow member that his report was too severe, Jozef Guislain, professor at the university and also president of the society, asked for an understanding of "my specific position, my position of *rapporteur*" and to not consider him as an "obstinate critic."[59]

In more severe disputes, form's priority over content could equally provide a way out of conflict. One of the themes that caused such heated debate was the relationship between diseases and organic lesions. In early nineteenth-century Belgium, the "materialist" writings of the French physician François Broussais, who advanced the inflammation of organic tissues as the exclusive cause of all diseases, sharply divided the Belgian medical community.[60] Within the context of these debates on medical materialism, a study submitted by Jules Brenier evoked much consternation. As the meeting report stipulated, the society members initially "felt attacked in their scientific principles."[61] Yet, they concluded that Brenier's study was "a work written with ease and even with elegance" and that the

58. De Bont, "'Writing in Letters of Blood'" (n. 13), 311–17.

59. "Séance du 10 Septembre 1844," *Bull. de la SMG* 10 (1844): 295–330, quotation on 305: "à ma position toute particulière, à ma position de rapporteur . . . un critique intraitable."

60. Pierre F. Daled, *Spiritualisme et matérialisme au XIXe siècle: l'Université libre de Bruxelles et la religion* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1998), 88–96; W. Randall Albury, "Corvisart and Broussais: Human Individuality and Medical Dominance," in *Constructing Paris Medicine*, ed. Caroline Hannaway and Ann La Berge (Clio Medica: 50) (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 221–50.

61. "Séance du 2 Décembre 1845," *Bull. de la SMG* 11 (1845): 321–60, quotation on 321: "attaque dirigée contre nos principes scientifiques."

society should "pay tribute to its conviction and the talent with which he expresses his views."[62] After the meeting, the secretary explained to Brenier in a letter the "quasi-contradiction" that his scientific views were opposed, but his style applauded. One passage, however, in which the doctrine of materialism was expressed, needed to be cut: "It is the sacrifice of a dozen lines of which the suppression may thwart you, but which will one day be pleasant, and perhaps advantageous."[63] Brenier understood the message, writing in a published response to the report, that "such a discussion would lead us to the controversial question of spiritualism and materialism, and it is perhaps not the moment to approach such a grave matter."[64] It was indeed by conforming to the procedures and style of scientific debate that men like Brenier, who later also engaged in fierce disputes on homeopathy, remained part of the scientific world, although their opinions might have been regarded as "nonscientific" by most members of the scientific community.

Similar to Brenier's work, the editing of the society's meeting reports was also a way of managing disagreement. Formally, these reports resemble those of the political debates, for example, conducted in the Belgian parliament or the town council of Ghent, which began to be published in the same period. Similar to such political reports, they give a lively impression of the debates. In discussions on treatments, for example, the lists of authors who had published on a topic was sometimes supplemented by members who stayed anonymous in the meeting report, but made short interventions: "*One member*: By Hermann Nasse. *Another member*: And by Schwencke, Lecanu, etc."[65] These interventions, however, are also somewhat misleading as they mask the careful editing of these published discussions. Equal to the parliamentary debates, the shorthand transcriptions made during the meetings were embellished, expanded, or reduced before they were published.[66] Other parts of the meetings, undoubtedly

62. Ibid., 327: "une oeuvre écrite avec facilité et même avec élégance . . . en témoigner en même temps à l'auteur l'hommage que lui méritent sa conviction et le talent avec lequel il l'exprime."

63. ULG, Cor., letter of December 16, 1845, of the Medical Society of Ghent to Jules Brenier, "c'est le sacrifice d'une dizaine de lignes dont la suppression pourra vous contrarier d'abord, mais qui un jour pourra vous être agréable, et peut-être avantageuse."

64. "Seánce du 3 Mars 1846," *Bull. de la SMG* 12 (1846): 13–18, quotation on 18, "Mais cette discussion nous conduiserait à la question si controversée du spiritualisme et du matérialisme, et ce n'est peut-être pas le moment d'aborder cette grave question."

65. "Séance du 9 Janvier 1844," *Bull. de la SMG* 11 (1844): 3–41, quotation on 28: "*Un membre*: Par Hermann Nasse. *Un autre membre*: Et par Schwencke, Lecanu etc."

66. On the codes of conduct and the transcriptions of parliamentary debate in Belgium: Josephine Hoegaerts, "La voix du pays: Masculinity, Vocal Authority and the Disembodied

the more chaotic or intense discussions, were summarized: "A very animated discussion began."[67] And the comment that a meeting was devoted to internal affairs meant that the discussions would not be published.[68]

For the Medical Society of Ghent in the 1850s, the editing of the meeting reports was done by the adjunct-secretary, Edouard Jean Lesseliers, and the secretary, Charles Poelman. In reading through a few of their letters, we get a rare look into the practicalities of this editing. For Lesseliers, it was an unpleasant task, as he complained to Poelman: "Everyone was informed that those who had not sent in their notes by Sunday, would see their speech reproduced at their own risk and peril. . . . When I do it well, no one complains; but the moment a member acted improperly or awkwardly during discussion, they blame me for reproducing the blunders they committed."[69] On another occasion, Lesseliers was himself offended by one of the society members who had saddled him with the editing of his speech, which Lesseliers seems to have refused, sending him his notes of the discussion instead.[70] Although such editing was apparently not regarded highly, both Lesseliers's reference to "risk and peril" and his own offense hint at the importance of editing one's speech. More than the machinery of editorial work, these practices were part of the very dynamics of scientific debate.

This became most clear when the editing indeed failed to pacify conflict and became itself an object of dispute. In a heated discussion between Daniel Mareska, professor at Ghent University, and the military surgeon Auguste Sotteau on treatments with quinine sulfate, Sotteau reproached Mareska that his objection "was not phrased verbally as clearly during

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Citizen in the Nineteenth Century," in *Political Masculinities*, ed. Kathleen Starck and Birgit Sauer (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming); Marnix Beyen, "De Parlementaire Handelingen en andere bronnen voor de studie van de taal van de negentiende-eeuwse politicus," *Verslagen en mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse taal en letterkunde* 114 (2004): 11–18.

67. "Séance du 6 Octobre 1835," *Bull. de la SMG* 1 (1835): 147–62, quotation on 160: "Il s'engage une discussion très animée."

68. See, for example, "Revue," *Bull. de la SMG* 9 (1843): 56–70, 70.

69. ULG, Cor. R., letter of October 21, 1854, of Edouard J. Lesseliers to Charles Poelman: "Tout le monde était averti que ceux qui n'avaient pas envoyé leur note avant dimanche, verraient leur speech reproduit à leur risques et périls. . . . Quand je le fais bien, personne ne s'en plaint; mais du moment qu'un membre a été inconvenant ou maladroit dans la discussion, il s'en prend à moi de ce que je reproduis en termes convenables les bévues qu'il a commise."

70. ULG, Cor. R., letters of March 12, 1854, and May 2, 1854, of Edouard J. Lesseliers to Charles Poelman.

the meeting as it appeared in the Bulletin."[71] Mareska, in turn, asked permission to speak for a personal fact—again resembling parliamentary debate—to protest against Sotteau's assertion: "What was printed in the Bulletin, was said in the meeting. But I have a vague memory . . . that he [Sotteau] left the meeting while I was talking."[72] The conflict between Mareska and Sotteau shows the limits of the editing of meeting reports to overcome disagreements and personal conflicts. It was indeed acceptable to embellish and clarify verbally performed speeches, but not to alter or change it completely: verbal speech and printed discourse at least had to resemble each other, Sotteau seems to suggest.

The Punctual Secretary: The Pursuit of Regularity

After making it through the perilous procedures of review and discussion, the wish of each author was the speedy publication of his study in the *Annales*. Yet, the final stages of the publishing process, the printing and distributing, were also the times when delays, to the frustration of authors like Carolus, most often occurred. It is through these delays, and more precisely through the actions taken to prevent them, that we can peek into the machinery that was set in motion after a positive judgment. This machinery included the messengers, correctors, and proofreaders, the printers and booksellers, and even in cases of international shipments of prizes and medals the diplomatic personnel. In the archival record, these historical actors appear on the horizon only through the lens of the secretary of the society who was in charge of the coordination of the society's efforts.

For Charles Poelman, secretary of the society in the middle of the century, it was the continuation and steady publication of the society's journals that mattered most. In 1847, he ended collaboration with the proofreader Hemmebert from the town of Tournay because of his distance from the city of Ghent and the delays in the correction of proofs, which would "inevitably impede the regularity of our publications."[73] In March 1853, Poelman similarly wrote, on behalf of all the society members, to the publishers of the society, the brothers Ferdinand and Eduard

71. "Séance du 9 Janvier 1844," *Bull. de la SMG* 10 (1844): 3–41, quotation on 13–14: "n'a pas été formulée, verbalement, aussi nettement lors de la séance dont il s'agit, qu'elle ne l'est dans le Bulletin."

72. Ibid., 16: "Ce qui a été imprimé dans le Bulletin, a été dit dans la séance. Mais j'ai un souvenir vague . . . qu'il [Sotteau] a quitté la séance pendant que je parlais."

73. ULG, Cor., letter of September 21, 1847, of Charles Poelman to Mr. Hemmebert: "inévitablement entraver la régularité de nos publications."

Ghyselinck, to complain about the "irregularity of our publications which is not of the sort to attract numerous subscriptions."[74] Such worries hint at the ambition of the society members to publish a journal that would compete on the market—an ambition for which a close cooperation with the publisher was essential. These anxieties were equally present in other medical societies. In a rarely preserved contract between the publisher Ernest Buschmann and the Medical Society of Antwerp, fines were even agreed upon in case of publication delays.[75]

More than commercial motives drove the society's editors. Unlike the editors of other scientific journals, they did not manage themselves the subscriptions to the *Annales* and the *Bulletin*.[76] The commercial exploitation of these journals was left to the Ghyselinck firm. This division between science and commerce seems also more in line with the philanthropic framing of the society's activities; as indicated in its articles, the society pursued "the progress of science and the alleviation of the suffering of humanity."[77] Profit and wages were hard to reconcile with such ambitions. This might also have brought the adjunct-secretary in 1854 to decline a proposed remuneration of one hundred francs, explaining that he could not accept such a sum while the secretary did so much more without any allowance.[78] The secretarial functions of the society were perceived as honorary functions, to be taken up not to enhance one's income, but as a form of social and professional engagement. To accept such remuneration would be to equate oneself with those men who operated behind the scenes: the messengers, translators, and correctors—Hemmebert for example made around three hundred francs each year. In the nineteenth-century medical world, however, the lack of remuneration for the journal editors made medical societies somewhat exceptional. In general, editing was a paid practice, although, apart from the most successful editors, never fully professional employment.[79] This again differentiated the journals of medical societies from a number of contemporary commercial scientific and medical journals.

74. ULG, Cor., letter of March 2, 1853, of the Medical Society of Ghent to the publishers Ghyselinck: "de l'irrégularité de nos publications qui est de nature a provoquer des abonnements nombreux."

75. House of Literature, Antwerp, S 7346 Société de Médecine, contract of March 8, 1845, between the Medical Society of Antwerp and the publisher Ernest Buschmann.

76. William H. Brock, "The Development of Commercial Science Journals in Victorian Britain," in *Development of Science Publishing in Europe*, ed. Arthur J. Meadows (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1980), 95–122.

77. *Statuts* (n. 38), 3: "aux progrès de la science et au soulagement de l'humanité."

78. ULG, Cor. R., letter of March 4, 1854, of Dr. Jouipaers to Charles Poelman.

79. Bynum and Wilson, "Periodical Knowledge" (n. 21), 38–41.

The Ghyselinck brothers, to the contrary, were interested in the first place in the profits yielded by the society's publications. Although these profits are difficult to assess, the relatively low fee of nine francs for an annual subscription in Belgium, roughly the equivalent of four to five visits for an urban physician, does suggest that the journal was at least competitive on the market for scientific journals.[80] And besides the journal issues, the additional individual copies, including the luxurious editions requested by the more affluent authors, ensured an important market. Yet, it would be a mistake to present the Ghyselinck firm as the mere commercial arm of the society. As Jonathan Topham has made clear, the publisher was far from a passive player in the nineteenth-century scientific community.[81] In the case of the Medical Society of Ghent, the publisher also played a crucial role in maintaining the international contacts of the society. For the distribution the society's journals and the acquiring of foreign literature, the international trading network of the Ghent firm was essential. In 1843, it was through their contacts that a system of exchange was set up with various major Parisian medical journals. The editors of the *Gazette médicale de Paris*, *L'Expérience*, and the *Gazette des Hopitaux* were asked to send the issues intended for the Medical Society of Ghent to the bookseller Chamerot in Paris, who would send them to his colleague Hendrik Hoste in Ghent, with whom Ghyselinck collaborated.[82] Through such mechanisms, the publisher played an important role in uniting the seemingly contradictory efforts of the disinterested practice of science and the commercial circuit of scientific journals.

The interests of publisher and society, however, did not always coincide. On some occasions, after a bungled package or a wrongly sent invoice, secretary Poelman indeed complained of "a man who is entirely occupied with the profits of his business."[83] Besides such minor problems, reprints in particular could evoke disagreement. When Jozef Guislain's study *Sur l'instinct*, for example, was reproduced without permission of the society and offered for sale in Hoste's shop, the society was offended, emphasizing that the Ghyselinck brothers were only the *publishers* and not the *proprietors*

80. ULG, VLBL. HFI. M. 032.03 Société de Médecine, letter of January 1, 1840, of the publishers Ghyselinck to the subscribers to the *Ann.* and *Bull. de la SMG.* On the fees of nineteenth-century medical practitioners in Belgium, see Velle, *De nieuwe biechtvaders* (n. 21), 115–19.

81. Topham, "Scientific Publishing" (n. 15), 581–83.

82. ULG, Cor., letters of October 12, 1843, of the Medical Society of Ghent to Jules Guérin, Henroz, and Fabres (requests to send journals to Chamerot).

83. ULG, Cor., letter of November 6, 1854, of the Medical Society of Ghent to Dr. Van Berchem: "d'un homme entièrement occupé de réaliser les bénéfices de son commerce."

of the study.[84] Such incidents help explain the careful negotiations on the publication of such major works. In 1854, when Guislain again wanted to publish a study, now on the condition of Belgian insane asylums, he first agreed on the terms with the society, which then negotiated with Ghyselinck. As the Ministry of Justice already had subscribed to hundred copies, their negotiating position at this occasion was quite strong, making it possible to again ask for guarantees that no additional copies would be printed without the permission of the society.[85]

If such government support was a welcome bonus for Guislain, it was much more essential for the Medical Society of Ghent in general. As the society renounced commercial profit, it depended largely on governmental subsidies to cover its costs. Even if the majority of publishing costs (and profits) fell to the publisher, several expenditures remained, most notably transportation, correction, and in some cases translation costs, the fees of the artists who made drawings like the facsimile in Carolus's edition, and also the financing of the issues sent to befriended learned societies and the copies given to each contributing author. For such financing, the archival record for the early 1840s indicates that three sources of subsidizing were tapped: the city of Ghent gave six hundred francs each year, the province of East Flanders provided one thousand francs, and the central government allocated an annual subsidy of two thousand francs.[86] Again, it was the society's secretary who managed the machinery of requests and reports that were typical of government subsidizing. In such a context, the publications of the society were presented to meet the demands of another type of audience, one of government officials and politicians. Those readers did not scrutinize the phrasing of the meeting report, but measured success in terms of quantity and regularity. In a characteristic report in 1844, the society for example reported to the provincial governor having published twenty-four volumes, containing "more than three hundred and forty studies and observations, close to three hundred reports of studies."[87] In the eyes of the administrators, publications were finished products. And

84. ULG, Cor., letter of March 19, 1846, of the Medical Society of Ghent to the publishers Ghyselinck.

85. ULG, Cor., letter of September 9, 1853, of the Medical Society of Ghent to the publishers Ghyselinck; ULG, Cor. R., letter of September 7, 1853, of Jozef Guislain to Charles Poelman; ULG, Cor. R., letter of September 10, 1853, of the publishers Ghyselinck to the Medical Society of Ghent.

86. An overview of the different subsidies of the society was presented in ULG, Cor., letter of September 19, 1845, of the Medical Society of Ghent to the minister of internal affairs.

87. ULG, Cor., letter of April 14, 1844, of the Medical Society of Ghent to the provincial governor: "Plus de trois cent quarante mémoires et observations, près de trois cents rapports."

in such capacity, the secretary did not hesitate to characterize them as "scientific monuments" that contributed to the city's glory, the well-being of the province, and the honor of Belgium's medicine.[88]

In the same period of the early 1840s, however, the skills of the secretary in maintaining this system of collaboration among society, government, and publisher were tested by the publication of a comprehensive study of plastic surgery: the *Exposé critique de la chirurgie plastique* by the German physicians D'Ammon and Baumgarten.[89] The study was awarded a prize in the society's prize competition of 1840, which entailed the translation from German to French, the publication of the work, and the sum of three hundred francs. The costs of translation, however, ran up to six hundred francs, a heavy investment for the society.[90] But to its detriment, the government subsidies dropped at the same time, leaving the society with a heavy deficit. Undoubtedly, the foundation of the Academy of Medicine in 1841, entirely funded by the central government, was an important factor in the diminution of the society's subsidies. More generally, the governmental budget for the "encouragement of the sciences" also dropped in 1842: from fifty thousand to forty-four thousand francs annually. The Medical Society of Ghent was one of the victims of this economization: its subsidy was halved to one thousand francs by the middle 1840s.[91]

The society responded by equally saving on its expenses. To the regret of the society members, the exchange of publications with several foreign learned societies was suspended and publications were diminished. In the 1840s, the society for a moment flirted with bankruptcy, leading its secretary to write to the parliamentarian Pierre De Decker, who had defended the society in the past, that if no subsidy were to be allocated in

88. For example, ULG, Cor., letter of April 7, 1852, of the Medical Society of Ghent to the provincial governor: "monument scientifique."

89. F. A. D'Ammon and Maurice Baumgarten, *Exposé critique de la chirurgie plastique et des résultats auxquels elle est parvenue* (Gand: Gyselynck, 1843).

90. "Séance du 8 Janvier 1839," *Bull. de la SMG* 5 (1839): 5–20, 6–7 (announcement of prize competition); "Séance du 1 et du 8 Décembre 1840," *Bull. de la SMG* 6 (1840): 193–210, 193 (award). Between their award in 1840 and the publication in French in 1843, however, D'Ammon and Baumgarten also published a German version of their work to the dissatisfaction of the society, which nevertheless decided to continue the publication of the French translation: "Séance du 13 Juillet 1842," *Bull. de la SMG* 8 (1842): 93–105, 94–95. On the translation costs, see ULG, Cor., letter of August 12, 1844, of the Medical Society of Ghent to Pierre J. F. De Decker.

91. In 1844, the society requested an additional subsidy of one thousand francs to the Ministry of Internal Affairs through the intermediary of the provincial governor: ULG, Cor., letter of April 14, 1844, of the Medical Society of Ghent to the provincial governor. On the diminution of the budget for the support of the sciences, see *Statistique générale de la Belgique: exposé de la situation du Royaume* (Brussels, 1841–50), 204.

1844, the society would be unable to renew the contract with its publisher: "You would deplore, with us, the dissolution of the Society which would be the result: because it's only through our publications that this association can exist."[92] Together with the letter, a copy of the finished *Exposé* was sent to De Decker, with the request to present the book, "with its 290 figures," to the minister of internal affairs to support the subsidy requests of the society. The society had indeed continued with the publication of the *Exposé*, which was described as a "debt of honor."[93]

The difficulties with the publication of the *Exposé* show the fragility of the machinery operating behind the scenes of nineteenth-century medical societies. Success rested on the skill of its secretary to mediate among publisher, government, and author and thus to secure the steady publication (and financing) of the society's work. It depended on negotiating with the booksellers, on urging the cooperation of the publishers and authors, on writing subsidy requests and reports, and on the lobbying of government officials. Such practices hint at the daily (or weekly) reality of the secretaries of medical societies. These practices gain meaning not so much within a commercial context; it was not profit the society pursued (although success was often measured in terms of quantity and regularity). The unsalaried activities of the board members of medical societies rather need to be understood as ways of establishing reputation. It was not so much bankruptcy but honor that had been at stake in the publication of the *Exposé*.

Conclusion

Jonathan Topham has argued that early nineteenth-century scientific practitioners had to exploit "a range of voices" and employ these voices "at the appropriate time so as to cultivate one's reputation."[94] Such skills, as this article aimed to show, were equally necessary to participate in the publishing procedures of the Medical Society of Ghent. With the emergence of published meeting reports in the 1830s, these procedures became highly formalized and took the form of a role play, in which success depended on the ability of physicians to project themselves into the stylized roles

92. ULG, Cor., letter of November 19, 1844, of the Medical Society of Ghent to Pierre J. F. De Decker: "Vous déplorerez avec nous la dissolution de la société qui devait en être la suite: car c'est par nos publications seules que cette association peut exister."

93. ULG, Cor., letter of September 15, 1844, of the Medical Society of Ghent to the provincial governor: "accompagné de 290 figures" and "une dette d'honneur."

94. Topham, "Scientific Publishing" (n. 15), 596.

of either the contributing author or the righteous critic (and even the responsible and punctual secretary).

The introduction of these formalized review procedures reflects an important shift in the nineteenth-century medical sciences. By participating in the publishing procedures of medical societies, physicians articulated new professional values, such as open communication and contributing to science, that fit in with Michael Browns portrayal of the new conception of the medical sciences, as a collective effort, in the first half of the nineteenth century.[95] When trying to convince, support, criticize, or disagree with one's peers, physicians had to display modesty and disinterestedness, be fair in their critique, and avoid personal attacks. Different from the eighteenth-century gentleman, whose publications were intended as a display of his personal talents, the nineteenth-century medical practitioner, by publishing his medical observations through the agency of a medical society, presented himself as a servant to the sciences, pushing his individual ambitions to the background. The case of the Medical Society of Ghent, however, also shows that this transition was a gradual process. Certainly for established physicians, the preoccupation with safeguarding their reputation during the review process and their use of embellished copies as promotional gifts hint at the continued importance of scientific publications as means of acquiring personal fame. Even though the above-mentioned codes of conduct were precisely intended to set aside such matters of personal interest, the continued presence of personal attacks between authors and editors shows that honor and reputation nevertheless remained important aspects of scientific publishing.

The publishing procedures of medical societies also hint at more structural changes in the organization of medical research. If the medical sciences were indeed imagined as a collective effort, to which any physician could contribute, new mechanisms were also needed to create consensus among such an extended group of scientific practitioners. The introduction of formalized review procedures was an important component in this effort to determine what could be recognized as "science." The judging of scientific studies and the publishing of these judgments can be considered as ways of extending the group of peers beyond the community of society members. The development of new publishing techniques and genres, such as the meeting report, written in the style of parliamentary debates, and new forms of "virtual witnessing," such as the publication of drawings of surgical operations, were intended to establish trust among such a wider medical community. Taken together, these new

95. Brown, *Performing Medicine* (n. 4), 153–57.

genres presented a relatively open and transparent system of review and debate—a system in which disagreement was considered part and parcel of medical debate (but personal conflict was to be avoided). By reaching consensus on the nature of the medical sciences, and by establishing codes of conduct, medical societies, in sum, were places where scientific standards were being set.

In light of the current debates on peer review in the (medical) sciences, finally, the case of early nineteenth-century medical societies can also be of interest. The judgments conducted in these societies show most of all that "peer review" emerged in the medical sciences not as a system of selection, but rather as a means of encouraging public debate. This is perhaps best illustrated by the continued exchanges between authors and reviewers in the medical press after the publication of review reports. It was only from the second half of the century onward that unpublished works were increasingly rejected by societies, and that the review process occurred more and more behind closed doors—a transition that went hand in hand with more concise meetings reports. Historical and naturalist studies, such as Carolus's edition of a fourteenth-century manuscript, soon disappeared from medical scientific journals. In the early twentieth century, as John Burnham has shown, the editors of specialized journals expanded the system of peer review as a means of selecting studies among an increasing number of available manuscripts.[96]

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96. Burnham, "Evolution" (n. 8), 1326–27.